

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, April 16, 2009, 7 p.m.

ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Terry Kloeppel, Marin Blevins, Bill Pauls, Dennis Knudson, Dan Devine, Gary Kespohl, Sue Davis

Commission Absent: None

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Mike Griggs, Erika Coffman, Tammy Miller

Kloeppel called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Agenda: Hood asked the Commission to add a discussion about their budget to the agenda, after the park sales tax presentation. The agenda was approved as amended on a motion by Devine, seconded by Blevins.

Minutes: The minutes were approved on a motion by Blevins, seconded by Davis.

Monthly Report:

Blevins asked about the difference in participation numbers at Douglass Park?

Hood said it was likely because In 2008 Easter was in March, instead of April. The Easter egg hunt held at Douglass would have made the difference in the participation numbers.

Kloeppel asked about the Virginia Graeme Baker Act?

Griggs described the act which requires a certain type of drain in public pools and hot tubs to improve safety. The act was named for a child who drowned in a pool after getting stuck on a drain by a strong suction. At this point, Griggs said manufacturers have not caught up with the demand for the new drains.

Coffman added that the new requirement does pose a problem at some pools that have custom-made drains which will be hard to replace. Staff is working to make sure the department is in compliance.

Blevins asked if metal detectors were allowed in parks?

Griggs said they could be used but digging is not allowed. Detectors are mostly used to locate lost objects in the grass.

Davis asked about remote controlled airplanes?

Griggs said they are not allowed in the parks, as they can be too fast and dangerous for park users.

Hood added that they are actually prohibited by City ordinance, not department policy.

The monthly report was approved on a motion by Pauls, seconded by Knudson.

Upcoming Dedications

Hood mentioned that a dedication was planned for the following day (April 17) at the new MKT Trail Plaza, which is the intersection of Stewart and Providence. A plaza type area was constructed adjacent to the trail as a GetAbout Columbia non-motorized project. Senator Bond will be in attendance at the dedication.

The next dedication will be held either May 11 or 13 at the Atkins ballfields. A date will be firmed up soon and invitations will be sent.

The waterfalls at Stephens Lake Park will also be dedicated at the Nall family reunion on June 14. The Nall family donated the funds for the construction of the larger waterfall.

Park Sales Tax Presentation

The park sales tax will be on the ballot in 2010, as it will expire in the spring of 2011. Hood said staff is working to educate the public on the value of parks and recreation, in anticipation of the ballot. Parks administrative staff prepared a presentation to educate other staff members about it, which is being shared with the Commission tonight.

Griggs reviewed the presentation with the Commission. Highlights of the presentation included what projects are funded with the park sales tax, and the impact to the department and the City if the sales tax is not renewed. The presentation also emphasized how little the 1/8 cent park sales tax is to a consumer (1 penny per \$8).

The presentations also highlighted the benefits of the park sales tax to the economic health of the community. Large events such as the Show Me State Games are made possible by the park sales tax, as well as affordable recreational opportunities for local families.

After the presentation, Blevins requested that a copy of it be made available to the Commission.

Hood commented that there may be opportunities for speaking engagements in the community, however, staff cannot actively campaign for a ballot issue, so caution would be exercised.

Devine commented it may be beneficial to customize the presentation for the particular group. Hood agreed.

Kloppel asked who decided when the issue would be placed on the ballot?

Hood answered that the City Council has to approve an ordinance placing the issue. For the last ballot issue, staff spent about six months developing a list of projects that would be funded by it. That would likely be the same process again, which will likely start in the fall.

Kloppel said he hoped the park sales tax would not be on the same ballot as a lot of other similar taxes, as it would be more difficult to pass.

Hood said that is always a concern and that school, city and county officials do communicate on such issues to try to avoid multiple issues on one ballot.

Kespohl asked if the park sales tax could be on an earlier ballot than August or November, as a proposal to abolish Missouri's income tax may have an effect on it.

Hood agreed that it may have an effect, however, the school district is likely to have an issue on the ballot in April 2010.

Kespohl commented that perhaps August would be the best time to have it on the ballot.

Commission FY'10 Budget

Hood shared the proposed FY'10 budget with the Commission which would be unchanged from the current year, which totals \$4,270. The City Manager has asked for no increases in Commission budgets, unless there is good reason to have an increase.

Devine made a motion, seconded by Knudson, that the budget remain the same for the next fiscal year. All approved, motion carried.

Council Items

Hood shared these updates:

CARE Program- Council asked if more money were to be appropriated to the CARE program, which component would be most likely to receive it? Hood said that staff recommended an increase in the Options program which helps at-risk youth get their GED. Council approved an additional \$15,000 for Options, which will allow more students to be assisted.

County House Trail- A public hearing will be held on May 18 on the first phase of the trail which will link Twin Lakes to Stadium. Engineers have had to make some adjustments for bridges.

Capital Projects

Griggs shared these updates:

L.A. Nickell- staff performed greens aerification and topdressing.

Paquin Park- New fencing was installed.

Albert-Oakland Park- photos were shown of the new ag lime infield. In addition, roofs of the shelters that were damaged by hail were repaired.

Antimi Shelter- roof was repaired.

Antimi Complex- photos were shown of the new scorer's table.

Auburn Hills- the new shelter is complete.

Atkins Park- parking lot was striped and distance signs posted on the outfield fences.

Garth Nature Area- new curbs and a connecting walkway were constructed.

Twin Lakes fishing dock-new one has been installed.
Cascades Park-site is being prepared for construction.

Commission Comments

Kloepfel welcomed Coffman as the new recreation services manager.

Pauls informed staff that there is graffiti on the walls of the Creasy Springs bridge on Bear Creek Trail. He also asked about the new plaque at Albert-Oakland?

Griggs said the plaque had arrived and would be installed soon.

Kespohl asked if the Paquin program would be targeted again in budget reductions?

Hood said he did not know, that staff has taken measures to reduce expenses and rely on other means, such as Services for Independent Living for transportation for the residents. A fundraiser picnic is scheduled for April 21 at Riechmann to raise funds for the program as well.

Coffman added that Boone County Family Resources have been helpful as well and that Karen Ramey is working with them for further assistance.

Kespohl said that it seemed to him after talking to a couple of Council people, that Parks and Recreation would be a target for budget cuts.

Hood agreed, saying that staff is working diligently on the budget and cutting expenses. Fee increases will also help close the gap.

Kespohl stated he had concerns about the proposed bike boulevard on Windsor being proposed by GetAbout Columbia. He said sight lines there are not good, and he is worried that it will be a safety issue.

Knudson commented that he would like for another Commissioner to be the liaison to the Bike and Ped commission, a role he has filled for some time. The Commission meets the third Wednesday of the month.

Kloepfel asked for a volunteer, and then asked that the issue be placed on the agenda in May.

Staff Comments

Hood let the commission know that new organizational charts were laid at their places before the meeting, showing the new staff changes.

Coffman updated the Commission on upcoming events, including FestaPalooza, Earth Day, the Hershey Track and Field meet, caving trip and Special Olympics.

Griggs asked the Commission if they would like to see some recreation slides in the monthly presentation, similar to the Capital Projects update.

Commissioners indicated they would.

Hood told the Commission that the City Channel is going digital and would soon be located at Channel 80 on the Mediacom system.

Public Comments

None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.